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Celebrity Buzz

Murphy's death devastates husband

pg 30

Clinics swarmed before closures

Flu **Outbreak**

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

SHOTS Alison Lodge wasn't intending to get her H1N1 vaccination, but the death of a Calgary teen and the impending closure of the city's clinics made her think twice.

Lodge said the two-hour wait yesterday at the Whitehorn immunization clinic was worth it if it will keep her safe after she learned of 16-year-old Michael Gorbous' H1N1-related death last week.

"We are here at the last minute because of the death. If he was healthy and he died then it can happen to anyone. So we're here now, and better late than never," she said after receiving her vaccine.

Adding the vaccine to their Christmas lists didn't make most Calgarians happy, but they knew it had to be done, including Claire Matheson.

"It definitely isn't on my list — this is actually the last thing I want to be doing right now. But I have no choice," she said.

Today is the last day for the city's clinics, and in the new year Alberta Health Services will decide the next course of action "based on demand," according to spokesperson James Finstad.

ShareYourViews
calgaryletters@metronews.ca

Tunnel deal takes flight

$90M partnership brings Airport Trail link closer to realization

DARREN KRAUSE
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If the airport tunnel were Frankenstein, storm clouds would be building and lightning ready to bring the massive infrastructure project back to life.

Two years after the Airport Trail tunnel was in danger of being shelved for good, the city and Calgary Airport Authority yesterday announced a $90-million partnership that will put the transportation link one step closer to reality.

Runway

- The tunnel will go under a new, 14,000-foot, north-south runway expected to be in service by 2014.

Roughly one-third of the estimated $287-million project — connecting Airport Trail to Metis Trail via tunnel — has been put up, and now it's up to the feds and the province to pony up the additional cash, said Ward 3 Ald. Jim Stevenson.

Stevenson, who has been instrumental in leading the charge for the project's resurrection since he was elected two years ago, said the agreement was a huge reversal of fortune.

"I was turned down over and over again — and of course the mayor fought me on it for the first year," said Stevenson, adding that pressure from community associations, businesses and area citizens helped sway the airport authority — and ultimately the mayor — to move forward on the project.

"It's really the mayor that has turned this thing around. The mayor's really led the pace on this."

Inclusion in the city's Plan-It document was the first indication the tunnel could see progress, but until the ink dried on the agreement, Stevenson wasn't always sure a deal would be worked out. And now, the feds and the province will be asked to cough up $98.6 million each by March 1.

"I think that the feds and the province will realize what a critical piece of Canadian infrastructure this is," Stevenson said.

Grant Galpin of the Airport Trail Access Committee described his initial reaction as "ecstatic."

"We're very pleased to take a major step forward and feel like both the airport authority and the city have realized how critical this tunnel link is in the long-term future," said Galpin.

According to a release, the city will design and build the tunnel and then take over maintenance when the tunnel is complete.

Jet **Such great heights**

ROBIN KUNISKI/FOR METRO CALGARY

Samantha Hirlehay, 5, and Santa climb to new heights with a chance-of-a-lifetime sightseeing flight over Calgary, as Ronald McDonald House Southern Alberta takes the Telus corporate jet out for a spin during the annual Telus Santa Flights. Story, page 3.

News on the Move

What's this barcode for?
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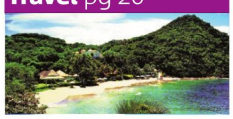
Travel pg 26



Rejuvenating island escape

Entertainment pg 28

Trends of the decade

On the web
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Local

Host Kelly leaving BT

After having been co-host of one the highest-rated morning shows in the city for over a dozen years, Dave Kelly announced on yesterday's BT Calgary telecast that he'll be leaving the show. Kelly, who's last show will air Dec. 31, is leaving the show to pursue full-time interest in Kelly Brothers Productions with his brother, Rob. METRO CALGARY

METRO INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2009 Festival of Media Awards

Calgary tweets

- @CalgaryFoodBank We're only $50,000 away from our goal of $800,000 in the CBC Suncor Food Drive. We can do this Calgary! Donate until Dec 24 at noon #yyc
- @onetinysuitcase Calgary Airport was booming today, holiday travelers everywhere. Thank goodness for their Free 30 min parking... and friendly staff! #yyc
- @gamergod Went to chinook mall in Calgary. #yyc it was dead! Odd. Found parking easy. Gonna be nuts tonite! Parking lot rage is fun to watch.
- @pullingshots really missing the old 3 story A&B sound in downtown Calgary. Can't find The Carpenters Christmas album anywhere. #fail

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video For Canadian troops in Afghanistan, small acts of kindness can make the biggest difference at **metronews.ca/canada**

Blogs Backbeat suggests giving the gift of vinyl this season.

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'Devastating' theft unsolved

Northland Village purse-snatching re-enacted to generate tips

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

The victim of a robbery last month is hoping witnesses come forward after her crime was recreated yesterday.

A victim in her 60s, who wishes to remain anonymous, remembers the Nov. 29 assault vividly as she recounted details for a Crime Stoppers re-enactment.

The victim was attacked from behind by a man as she was unlocking her vehicle at Northland Village mall. The attacker tried to steal her purse and dragged her across the ground to a vehicle where a woman was waiting.

"I knew if they were so intent on getting my purse, they were prepared to maim or kill me to get it, so I let go of the shoulder strap," she said, adding she was screaming for help.

"I said, someone help me, someone please help me but no one came. I was thinking, 'Why is no one coming to help me?'"

KRISTA SYLVESTER/METRO CALGARY

Two Crime Stoppers actors re-enact a Nov. 29 robbery and assault in which a woman in her 60s was dragged on the ground and had her purse snatched. Police are looking for tips in the crime.

After recovering from minor injuries, the victim says she isn't sure she will ever recover from the lasting emotional consequences.

"The devastating effects have been psychological. I have lost my independence because I don't like going out alone ... I don't feel safe anywhere with anyone when I'm alone."

Police are hoping the re-enactment generates tips in finding the two suspects, who fled in a silver domestic sedan with a stolen plate.

The male suspect is believed to be between 30 to 40 years old, six feet tall and 200 pounds with a medium build and brown hair.

Santa trades reindeer for a jet, takes kids for the ride

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

Fourth annual event

- This is the fourth year Telus has run the Santa Flights program, which provides a unique opportunity for children with life-threatening illnesses and their families to spend quality time together around the holidays.

Santa took the reins of a Telus corporate jet turned into a make-shift sleigh yesterday, giving a few kids a sleigh ride to remember.

Lifelong memories were created for 23 families residing at the Ronald McDonald House as they were chaperoned on the private jet for a sightseeing tour of the city from above, according to Telus's Josh Blaine.

"It's really all about creating wonderful memories for these families to experience the thrill ride of a lifetime. I think it really built a nice family moment," he said.

Robinson siblings Shawn, 13, and Taylor, 16 agreed after they enjoyed the 45-minute flight around the city.

"I was nervous but it was pretty cool. I saw the clouds and the city and mountains," first-time flyer Shawn said.

Neil Jesske and his four-year-old son especially enjoyed the trip together.

"It's nice to be able to see things through his eyes and the things that make him excited and bring him joy," the father said.

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CALGARY OBITUARIES

CalgaryObits.com notes the following deaths in our community:

BUSSOLI, Francesco Paolo
HODSON, Brian William
IZZO, Pietro
KAPP, Walter John
KERR, Valerie Joyce
KINDRET, Ronald Lawrence
KNIGHT, Viola (McKay)
LACHAPELLE, Ed
LUTZ, Ernest James (Jim)
MAGLIS, Roy Gordon Joseph
MAH, Wallace Wah Sun
MAHER, Naida Anne
MALLARI, Isabel Nonato (Bellie)
McGRATH, Thomas Joseph
McNAUGHTAN, John
McNEILL, Vera Elizabeth
MOFFAT, Walter (Wally) Lyle
MOODIE, William
NAUMESCU, Mihaela Rodica (nee Bucur)
NELSON, Clyde Tom
OLIVOS, Rodrigo Javier
RAFFAY, Margaret
RAHILLY, Donald Hugh
RICHARDSON, Dora Viola (nee Hendrickson)
ROTHERY, Ian M.P.
SEIB, Eva (nee Petrowicz)
SOMERS, Kenneth (Ken) Gordon
THACKER, John Lawrence
THIBEAULT, Simon
ZAUGG, Carolyn Elsie

For full obituaries go to CalgaryObits.com

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Salvation Army lands $25K after Wal-Mart donation
Calgary's Salvation Army Christmas Kettle campaign received $25,000 after Wal-Mart donated $100,000 to split between the Sally Ann's in North Vancouver, Winnipeg, Halifax and Calgary. The campaign was struggling to reach its $1.2-million goal. METRO CALGARY

Police warn of high-risk offender in city

Police are warning Calgarians about the release of an inmate into the city who poses a "significant risk" to the public.

Police say Curtis Dale Hill, 30, served a 10-year federal sentence for seven armed robberies and was released in Edmonton, but he has since moved to Calgary where he will be monitored by the high-risk offender program.

Curtis Hill

"The public is warned that (Hill) is an individual who has criminal convictions for offences against both females and males for personal gain," police said in a statement.

"Hill is both predatory and opportunistic and uses violence to achieve his goals."
Calgary police statement

"Hill is both predatory and opportunistic and uses violence to achieve his goals. He is particularly violent toward authority figures."

Hill also served time for break and enter, theft, possession of stolen property, assault, attempt to escape custody, uttering threats, contempt of court, assaulting a peace officer and unlawfully causing bodily harm.

He is described as Caucasian, five feet 11 inches tall and 150 pounds with brown shaved hair, green eyes and a fair complexion. He often wears glasses.

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Calgarian wins four honours at blog awards

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

ONLINE Exploring a variety of Canadian content with humour has garnered Calgary's own Mike's Bloggity Blog four honours at the Canadian Blog Awards.

Mike Morrison has been blogging Mike's Bloggity Blog from Calgary for four years now, and over the weekend he won Best Blog Post, Best Humour Blog, Best Popular Culture and Best Overall.

"I think part of my success is because I focus on Canadian stuff and tend to stay away from the celebrity tabloid stuff," Morrison said.

"The blog has become bigger than I ever dreamed it would."

Mike's Bloggity Blog garnered attention by focusing on the Junos, the Geminis and other Canadian events people talk about.

Morrison said he spends a lot of time immersing himself in popular culture through Twitter, press releases and even funny commercials, so he always has something to write about.

"At first I thought it would be hard to find enough content, but it's actually been really interesting. It turns out it's actually quite easy to stick with Canadian."

For those people who are interested, check out mikesbloggityblog.com.

Mustard Seed seeks clothing donations

CHRISTMAS The Mustard Seed is urgently seeking donations of new, unwrapped men's and women's winter coats, thermal underwear, winter boots, warm gloves, and sweaters for Christmas Day as it brings the gifts to those less fortunate.

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Fifteen cows killed after semi crash

Fifteen of 50 cattle were killed or had to be destroyed after a semi went out of control and flipped on its side after travelling on Highway 2 near Innisfail Monday evening. The truck driver was not seriously hurt. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Man who shot Mountie appealing verdict

An Alberta man convicted of shooting an RCMP officer in the Northwest Territories is appealing his first-degree murder conviction.

Emrah Bulatci's appeal notice says his charter rights were violated when his jailhouse conversations were recorded and later presented as evidence against him at his trial.

Bulatci, who is 25, also challenges more than a dozen rulings the judge made during the four-week trial, including instructions given to the jury.

Bulatci was sentenced last month to life in prison with no chance at parole for 25 years after a jury found him guilty in the death of Const. Chris Worden in October 2007.

Court heard Worden was shot four times as he was chasing Bulatci, who had come to Hay River to sell drugs.

Bulatci testified that had he never meant to fatally wound Worden when he shot at his legs, and that the last two shots went off accidentally while the pair were scuffling on the ground.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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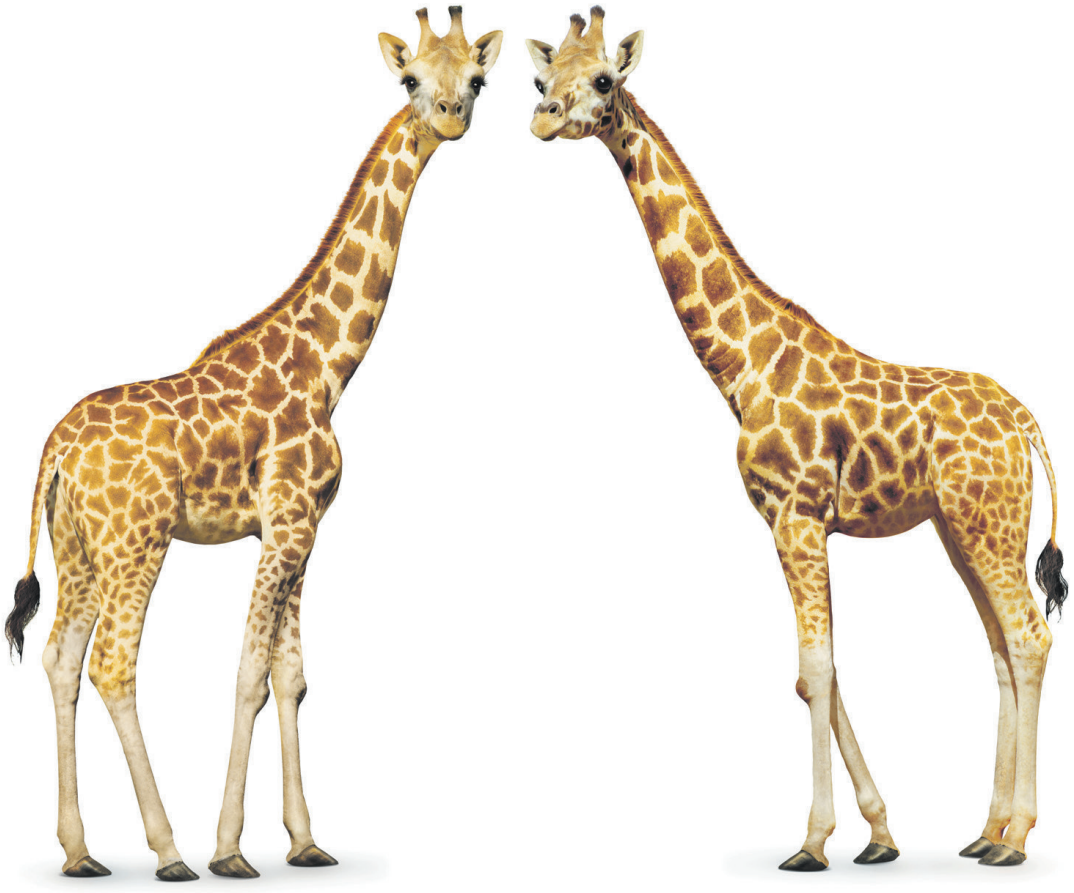

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Winnipeg teens allegedly steal car while wearing electronic ankle bracelets

It may be a sign of how brazen the criminals have become in the city known as Canada's auto-theft capital. Police say two teenagers who were already on the list of Manitoba's most chronic car thieves stole a Ford Fusion from a Winnipeg garage while they were still wearing electronic ankle bracelets from previous convictions. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Missing teen might be in Lafleur video

Quebec police have released a clip of a recent TV interview with hockey great Guy Lafleur, left, in the hopes of cracking a missing teen case. In the 11-second clip, a teenager bearing a strong resemblance to missing Quebecer David Fortin appears in the background. The Lafleur interview was recorded at Montreal's Bell Centre in early December. Fortin, 15, disappeared last February after leaving his Alma, Que., home for school.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Court rules for new libel defence

The Supreme Court of Canada offered journalists and bloggers a new defence against libel yesterday in a pair of rulings that were hailed as a landmark victory for free speech.

The rulings effectively exonerated the Toronto Star and Ottawa Citizen newspapers and created the new "responsible journalism" defence that will give reporters more leeway to pursue controversial stories as long as they are deemed to be in the public interest.

Media lawyers hailed the creation of the new defence as a major step towards reducing so-called libel chill, which prompts journalists to back away from contentious stories for fear of being sued, often by powerful interests with deep pockets to pay their lawyers.

The rulings also saved the two newspapers from paying out more than $1.5 million in damages, including $1 million for punitive damages against the Star, one of the largest such awards in Canadian libel history.

The Star story in question was about controversial plans for a golf course, while the Citizen's articles scrutinized the activities of a former police officer.

Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin, writing for the unanimous 9-0 court, said the existing libel defences were too restrictive.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Factual errors

- The rulings mean journalists can make factual errors, but as long as they take a series of steps to ensure fairness in stories that are deemed to be in the public interest, they cannot be successfully sued for libel.

Kandahar Christmas for troops

COLIN PERKEL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Master Warrant Officer Charlotte Hawes serves Christmas dinner at the Canadian military-civilian outreach base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, yesterday. Soldiers, many sporting Santa hats or reindeer horns, enjoyed some holiday fun and food.

News in brief

EMBASSY Canada has a reputation for producing a wide variety of excellent beers, but tipplers visiting the Canadian Embassy had just three choices of brews recently — Molson Canadian, Alexander Keith's Ale or Blue Light. One Canadian beer expert says it's a shame the embassy isn't doing a better job introducing Americans to some quality suds brewed north of the 49th parallel. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Meeting goes on despite boycott

AFGHANISTAN A House of Commons committee looking into the Afghan detainee controversy is going ahead with a meeting today despite a boycott by Conservative MPs.

Liberal, NDP and Bloc Québécois MPs on the special committee on Afghanistan decided to hold an informal meeting after they failed to achieve quorum. They are hearing from retired diplomat Gar Pardy and Paul Champ, lawyer for the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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ScanLife

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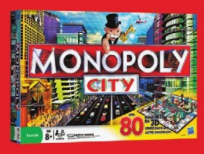

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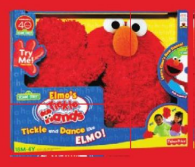

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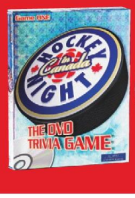

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Maclean's founder's home saved for now

The Ontario government has stepped in to prevent any further damage to the home of the founder of Maclean's magazine. Minister of Culture Aileen Carroll issued a stop order Monday to keep the Toronto home of John MacLean safe while the province looks at its potential heritage significance. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec backpedals on power deal

The Quebec government was suddenly singing a more conciliatory tune over its planned purchase of New Brunswick's power utility, suggesting yesterday the deal was still open for negotiation.

Just one day after Quebec's natural resources minister suggested the purchase of NB Power was a done deal and would not be changed, both she and Premier Jean Charest were saying the exact opposite.

"There are discussions," Charest told TVA network. "There could be improvements. It could happen."

For her part, Natural Resources Minister Nathalie Normandeau had a strikingly different message from the one she delivered 24 hours earlier.

She now says an agreement-in-principle was signed on Oct. 29, and that negotiations are continuing as New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham brings forward the concerns of critics who aren't yet sold on the deal.

"There could be improvements. It could happen."
Jean Charest, Quebec premier

"It's in this spirit of openness that our discussions continue with New Brunswick," Normandeau said in an interview.

The sale is a hot potato for the New Brunswick government, which has come under intense political fire over its plan to sell NB Power's assets to Hydro-Quebec for about $4.8 billion.

Critics have slammed the government for selling off key assets.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Carbon tax not ruled out: Harper

OTTAWA Prime Minister Stephen Harper is not ruling out a carbon tax for Canada sometime in the future.

Harper was asked point blank in a year-end interview with CTV News whether Canadians will ever see such a tax.

He responded simply that he hopes not to go down that road.

He said the government will have to see what the U.S. decides to do so it can be part of a harmonized North American climate-change plan.

Harper and his Conservatives hammered former Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion for making a carbon tax the centrepiece of his environmental plan during the last election.

Such tax proposals are generally applied to fossil fuel consumption to help encourage industry and the public to change their behaviour.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Salami brand may be contaminated

HEALTH The public is being warning to avoid eating a brand of salami because it may be contaminated with Listeria monocytogenes.

The warning from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Siena Foods of Toronto covers Siena brand mild Cacciatore Salami.

The federal agency says the product is known to have been distributed in Ontario and Quebec, but may also have been sold nationally.

The best before date on the packages, of various sizes is March 4, 2010.

There have been no reported illnesses associated with the consumption of this product.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Kidney gap widening, study shows

A study finds that the gap between supply and demand for donated kidneys is widening.

A report, released yesterday by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, shows a significant increase in the number of kidney transplants over the past decade.

But there has been a decline in the number of these transplants relative to the number of kidney failure patients, with six transplants per 100 patient years of dialysis in 2008, compared to eight transplants per 100 patient years of dialysis in 1999.

Jean-Marie Berthelot, vice-president of programs at the institute, says the rise in demand is partly due to an increase in diabetes-related kidney failure cases in Canada. The number of new patients with end-stage renal disease associated with diabetes nearly doubled, to nearly 1,900 in 2008 from about 1,000 in 1996.

"The need for transplantable organs has never been greater."
Dr. John Gill

"The need for transplantable organs has never been greater," said Dr. John Gill of the University of British Columbia.

Living donors accounted for 69 per cent of an increase in donors over the past decade, but they can donate only one kidney or part of a liver or lung.

A deceased donor can provide up to six organs for transplant.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty does not expect any substantial spending programs or tax reductions in the next budget.

Flaherty aims to stay the course

TAX Ottawa has ruled out significant tax cuts or new spending programs for Canadians in next year's federal budget, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty says.

With the deficit scheduled to hit a record $56 billion for 2009-2010, the finance minister told The Canadian Press in a year-end interview the government must keep spending under control and can't afford further tax cuts.

"I would not anticipate any new substantial spending programs or any new substantial tax reductions in the next budget. This is a stay the course budget," he said from his 21st-floor office in downtown Ottawa.

But Flaherty also ruled out tax increases or painful program cuts — for now — to rein in the deficit.

Barring a shocking development, Flaherty said he is optimistic the Canadian economy has stabilized and will experience moderate growth next year. "I'm not pessimistic," he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

SEX Researchers in Halifax looked into how men and women would feel if they cheated on their partner. The research concluded that men feel guiltier following sexual infidelity, while women feel guiltier after an emotional transgression.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Dog recovering from H1N1 flu

Experts say a dog in suburban New York City is the United States' first confirmed to be carrying the same strain of H1N1 flu that is infecting humans. The 13-year-old mixed-breed male is recovering. Animals can carry flu viruses, but Dr. Anne Schuchat of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says "this is not a reason to be concerned." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Big Christmas haul in Spain

Spain's Christmas lottery showered hundreds of thousand of euros in prize money on Madrid yesterday. The top prize of the lottery, ranked among the world's richest, went to holders of tickets bearing the number 78294, displayed by two lottery workers, left. The number appears on 1,950 tickets, and each holder stood to win about $430,000. Two immigrant workers from the Dominican Republic were among the winners. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Teen pleads no contest in Facebook sex scam

A Wisconsin teenager who blackmailed dozens of fellow high school students into sex acts by using photos and videos obtained in a Facebook scam faces up to 50 years in prison after pleading no contest to two felonies yesterday.

Anthony R. Stancl, 19, had faced 12 charges that carried a maximum penalty of nearly 300 years. He pleaded no contest to repeated sexual assault of the same child and third-degree sexual assault. In exchange, prosecutors dismissed charges that included second-degree sexual assault, child enticement and possession of child pornography.

Stancl was accused of posing as a girl online and persuading more than 30 classmates to send him naked pictures of themselves, then using the images to blackmail them for sex.

Authorities found more than 30 folders on Stancl's computer containing about 300 nude images of other male students at New Berlin Eisenhower High School.

Waukesha County district attorney Brad Schimel said he would recommend a "substantial" prison sentence and that he was satisfied with the plea agreement because Stancl still faces up to 50 years.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Blackmailed into sex

- The investigation began after a 16-year-old boy told authorities he was being blackmailed into acts of oral and anal sex with Stancl. The boy, then 15, had exchanged explicit pictures of himself online with "Kayla," who later threatened to spread his picture throughout the school unless he agreed to the acts with Stancl. Stancl photographed those encounters, giving him fodder for further blackmail, detectives said.

Italy **What is this, Toronto?**

ANTONIO CALANNI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Italian soldiers hold shovels as they walk past the Duomo cathedral in Milan yesterday. Italy has sent hundreds of soldiers to the streets of Milan after heavy snowstorms and freezing temperatures forced airports to be closed and trains to be halted. About 600 soldiers have begun to shovel snow.

Best Wishes

To the Calgary community for a safe and happy holiday season.

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Pakistani men sentenced to have noses, ears amputated

PAKISTAN A Pakistani court has ordered the noses and ears of two men cut off after they did the same thing to a young woman whose family spurned one of the men's marriage proposal, a prosecutor said yesterday.

The anti-terrorism court in the eastern city of Lahore said it was applying Islamic law by ordering the punishment. Lahore prosecutor Chaudhry Ali Ahmed said one of the accused, Sher Mohammad, was a cousin of the 19-year-old woman and wanted to marry her. Her parents refused his proposal.

Sher Mohammad and a friend, Amanat Mohammad, were accused of kidnapping the woman and cutting off her ears and nose in September.

The court on Monday also sentenced each man to 50 years in prison and told them to pay fines and compensation to the woman amounting to several thousand dollars, the prosecutor said.

Pakistan's legal system has Islamic elements that sometimes lead to orders for harsh punishments, but the sentences are often overturned and rarely carried out. Serious crimes are often referred to anti-terrorism courts in Pakistan because they move faster.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stealing OK sometimes: Priest

BRITAIN An English priest is giving some unconventional holiday advice — shoplifting may be OK.

Rev. Tim Jones was rebuked by fellow clergy and shop owners yesterday after delivering a Sunday sermon in which he said it was sometimes acceptable for desperate people to shoplift from large chain stores.

From his pulpit, Jones told his congregation that shoplifting can be justified if a person in real need is not greedy.

The remarks sparked a firestorm of protest.

Jones told The Associated Press that he stands by his comments. He said he regretted only that most of the focus had been on his shoplifting comments rather than his other points.

"The point I'm making is that when we shut down every socially acceptable avenue for people in need then the only avenue left is the socially unacceptable one," he said, adding that people are often released from prison without any means of support.

"What I'm against is the way society has become ever more comfortable with the people at the very bottom," he said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

COLOMBIA The governor of a southern state was found dead yesterday, his throat slit, less than 24 hours after being abducted by leftist rebels in the the first kidnapping of a major Colombian politician since 2002. The body of Luis Francisco Cuellar was found not far from where the 69-year-old was kidnapped Monday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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SCANLIFE

With an available couch or great restaurant tips a tweet away, social networking has changed the way we travel. Scan this barcode for the full story.

Former mountain biker pleads guilty

Former U.S. mountain bike world champion Melissa Giove has pleaded guilty to helping run a coast-to-coast marijuana smuggling ring. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

world 15

London **Prince samples life as a pauper**

CENTREPOINT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this image from the homeless charity Centrepoint yesterday, Britain's Prince William and Centrepoint CEO Seyi Obakin prepare for a night sleeping outside in freezing temperatures in central London. The Prince bedded down in a sleeping bag to experience being homeless.

Details could scuttle prisoner swap

Israel delivered its counter-demands yesterday for a deal with Hamas to exchange about 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for a single Israeli soldier held captive by Gaza militants for more than three years.

As families on both sides agonized over the outcome, last-minute differences over who should be freed or sent into exile threatened to imperil the deal.

Israel insists on expelling some West Bank-born prisoners to the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip or abroad and balks at releasing some inmates high on the Hamas wish list, said a senior Hamas official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not supposed to brief reporters.

Marathon discussions

• In recent days, marathon discussions about the swap at the top level of Israel's government conveyed a sense of urgency. However, more than three years of negotiations following the capture of the Israeli soldier have been shrouded in a fog of disinformation and spin, leading to repeated false alarms that a deal is close. The decision on whether to accept what would be the biggest swap in years is crucial for Hamas, which wrested Gaza from Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak appeared to be trying to temper expectations when he told a group of students that returning Sgt. Gilad Schalit was a "top priority" — but "not at any price," a reference to Palestinian prisoners convicted of bloody attacks.

The Hamas official said that while progress has been made, a deal is not imminent.

A Hamas website, al-Risalah, said a German mediator would meet later with Hamas leaders in Gaza who will "take a final and conclusive decision on what the German mediator brings from his visit to the occupied territories."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Woman arrested for Obama threat

HAWAII A woman accused of telling the U.S. Secret Service she would "blow away" Michelle Obama was in federal custody yesterday as the Obama family planned to travel to Hawaii.

Kristy Lee Roshia, 35, was charged with threatening a family member of the president and assaulting a federal agent after being arrested Saturday less than two miles from where the Obama family planned to stay during a holiday visit later this week.

Roshia called the Secret Service's Boston office last month and told a receptionist, "I will kill Michelle Obama," according to a Secret Service affidavit.

Roshia has a history of leaving rambling messages and sending poems, love letters and photographs of herself to the Secret Service, according to the affidavit. She was being held without bail pending detention hearing.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Parliamentarian wants veil ban

FRANCE A French parliamentarian said yesterday he would file legislation to bar Muslim women from wearing veils that hide their faces in public. Jean-Francois Cope suggested that he would submit his bill before the panel issues its report. He said he wants the veil banned not just from public buildings but also in the streets of France. "We want a ban in public areas," Cope said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment

Jim and the magic ministry

Flaherty stuck with maintaining financial recovery illusion

TheWestView

You've got to feel sorry for Jim Flaherty, who's in charge of the Ministry of Magic these days.

Oops, sorry. That's the Finance Ministry. Although Flaherty probably wonders if Harry Potter would be better suited to the job.

Take the "recovery," for instance.

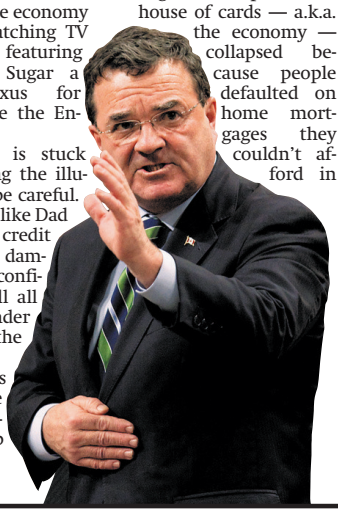
If that's not magic, I don't know what is. Nothing has really happened since 2008, when we woke up with the mother of all hangovers, induced by a decade-long orgy of spending money we haven't got.

All at once, half the value we assumed was in our homes and businesses simply disappeared. We scurried under our beds and refused to come out. Until now — even though nothing has changed. Nonetheless, magicians, er, economists, now declare the recession over, thanks to Joe Consumer, back spending money he hasn't got.

I'm not making this up. Less than a year after the world's leaders pumped all their spare cash into the banks to keep the economy afloat, we're watching TV commercials featuring Daddy buying Sugar a brand-new Lexus for Christmas, while the Envys look on.

And Flaherty is stuck with maintaining the illusion. He has to be careful. If he's too much like Dad ranting about credit card bills, he'll damage "consumer confidence" and we'll all crawl back under the bed, ending the "recovery."

The trance is not entire. The consumer confidence index is up 3.7 in December — we're confident in our short-term finances and employment status, but we're still cautious about the future. Still, we're 26.2 per cent more confident (deluded?) than we were at this time last year.

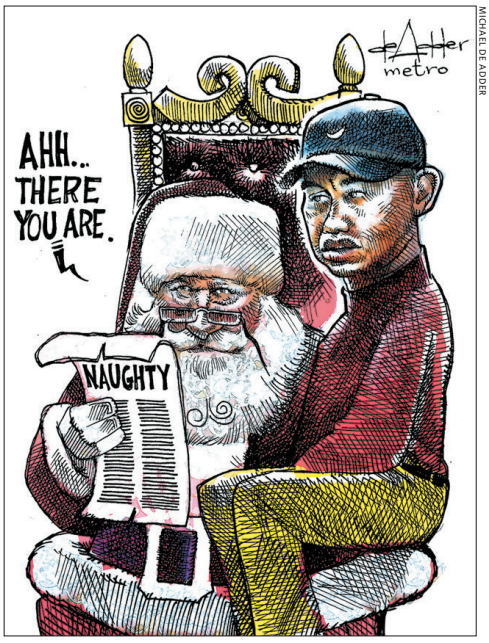

Jim Flaherty

Ever the responsible magician, Flaherty is trying to manage the spell. The house of cards — a.k.a. the economy — collapsed because people defaulted on home mortgages they couldn't afford in the first place. So if interest rates go up — and up they must go if we don't want runaway inflation (bad magic) — people who depend on cheap money will go down and the "recovery" will be over. Flaherty says he will make it tougher to walk into a mortgage: Requiring an actual cash down payment or limiting the term of the mortgage. What? No more 30-year mortgages at two per cent?

Predictably, some magicians worry Flaherty will put a damper on the economy, which, it appears, is fuelled 100 per cent by pixie dust. So, as you sit by the warmth of the fire this holiday season, bolstering your confidence with a bowl of punch, you might spare a moment of sympathy for Tiny Jim.

And it's a good time to count our blessings while we still can — we're OK — at least until the visit of Christmas Yet to Come.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting; vancouverletters@metronews.ca.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Online chatter

Follow Metro on Twitter for news updates and more: @metrocalgary

Asked on Twitter: What's your favourite holiday tradition?

CALGARY

@jess4002 we love listening and singing along to christmas music all throughout december! even the terrible christmas songs.

TORONTO

@bodsworth Unwrapping new pajamas every Christmas Eve, so come Christmas morning we look fresh and clean for gift giving pics!

HALIFAX

@raine_angel my family has a special advent tree decorated with special ornaments and a chain link. Every day we remove one link!

EDMONTON

@lukesheds being passive aggressive toward relatives?

@M4TTW4RD ski-doing and skating with my entire family at long island lake on boxing day. :D

VANCOUVER

@kirksettle definitely the enormous family get-togethers that are almost unreasonably big, like three turkeys for 40 people every x-mas.

@chatkiller hmm ... It would have to be putting up the Christmas tree with my folks, along with putting up lights and ornaments.

@gayvancouver Our fave holiday tradition is our annual Santa photo. Two grown men on Santa's knee certainly livens things up in the mall!

Word on the street: What's your favourite holiday tradition?

Sabine Kendall
Calgary
A: I think my favourite tradition is going skiing with the whole family at Christmas.

Adam Cochrane
Calgary
A: We always did a Boxing Day buffet with family and friends and music and food.

Ashley Young
Edmonton
A: My favourite tradition would be Christmas baking before Christmas and then on Christmas Day, the whole process of gift opening and stockings. Stockings are my favourite.

David Sadai
Toronto
A: My girlfriend's parents still put "from Santa Claus" on the gifts ... and they're already under the tree.

Victoria Pianarosa
Bedford, N.S.
A: Making agnolotti with my in-laws. It's a fun thing that everyone in the family participates in. We cut it up and make the filling — then we eat them all. It usually takes a whole afternoon.

Ian Mauer
Vancouver
A: Stuffing stockings and hanging them up above the fire. It's great to do that every year. I remember when I was a kid, me and my brothers would look forward to it. We had the same stockings for years.

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*According to an independent consumer survey conducted in November 2009.

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Bank of Nova Scotia sets up in Dubai
The Bank of Nova Scotia said yesterday it has been approved to set up independent operations in Dubai's financial district, making it the first Canadian bank to do so. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Business

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US 0.31¢	US 4.6¢	US 68¢	73.26

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Business in brief

EMPLOYMENT Statistics Canada says the number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance benefits in October edged down 0.5 per cent to 809,600. That was still 61.8 per cent, or 309,300 more than drew benefits in October 2008. Over the year, the number of people drawing benefits rose in every province and territory. The largest increases were in Ontario, with 122,200 more recipients and Alberta, up 56,400. THE CANADIAN PRESS

m.metronews.ca
SCANLIFE
A sales boom has shot China past the U.S. as the world's largest auto market, with plenty of potential customers still car-less. Scan this barcode for the full story.

Auto industry poised to turn

ECONOMY The beleaguered auto industry is poised for a slow but steady turnaround in 2010 that will usher in an era of profitability and job growth after years of declines, according to a new industry forecast.

The Conference Board of Canada said the auto sector isn't necessarily out of trouble but there are encouraging signs that profits will return in 2010 and strengthen each year through to at least 2014.

"The Canadian auto industry appears to have turned a corner in the second half of 2009 and is expected to return to profitability in 2010," economist Sabrina Browarski wrote in the report.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Microsoft Word judgment upheld

A U.S. federal appeals court has upheld a $290-million US judgment against Microsoft Corp. in a patent case launched by Canada-based i4i Inc.

The ruling also includes an injunction, set to go into effect Jan. 11, that would prevent the sale of at least some versions of Microsoft's popular Word word processing software.

The decision was on an appeal Microsoft launched against a verdict returned by a Texas jury in favour of i4i.

The jury found recent versions of Microsoft Word infringed on a software patent.

Michel Vulpe, founder and co-inventor of i4i, said in a statement that the company is pleased with the decision, calling it "an important step in protecting the property rights of small inventors."

i4i chairman Loudon Owen called the decision a "vindication for i4i and a war cry for talented inventors whose patents are infringed."

"The same guts and integrity that are needed to invent and go against the herd, are at the heart of success in patent litigation against a behemoth like Microsoft," Owen said in a statement.

"(The decision is) an important step in protecting the property rights of small inventors."
Michel Vulpe, i4i

Kevin Kutz, Microsoft's director of public affairs, said the software company is "moving quickly to comply with the injunction."

Kutz said the injunction "applies only to copies of Microsoft Word 2007 and Microsoft Office 2007 sold in the U.S. on or after the injunction date of Jan. 11, 2010."

"Copies of these products sold before this date are not affected," he added.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Yankees add another arm

Pitcher Javy Vazquez has been traded back to the New York Yankees by Atlanta in a swap that sent Melky Cabrera to the Braves yesterday. New York also gets left-hander Boone Logan as part of the deal, and the Braves obtained pitching prospects Mike Dunn, a lefty, and right-hander Arodys Vizcaino, and about $500,000 US. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports

Marquis ready to lead

Jason Marquis says he's ready to fill the role of veteran leader for a young Washington Nationals pitching staff. The free-agent right-hander signed a $15-million US, two-year contract yesterday. He joins a staff whose rotation at times last season consisted of second-year player John Lannan and four rookies. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Aiming to make history

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

Visually impaired cross-country skier Brian McKeever is a step closer to becoming the first winter athlete to compete in both the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The 30-year-old from Canmore won an able-bodied 50-kilometre Nor-Am race yesterday, a result he needed to be eligible for the Olympic team.

But the number of spots on Canada's Olympic roster hasn't been confirmed and it will be up to Cross Country Canada to decide if McKeever will race the 50K in Whistler in February.

"It's the best race I could lay down today and whatever happens, happens," McKeever said. "That's all you can ask, to have the best race on the day when it matters."

He won in two hours 21 minutes 8.5 seconds. Brent McMurtry of Calgary was second in 2:22:20.9 and Kevin Sandau of Calgary was third in 2:22:40.4.

The national cross-country ski federation will name its complete Olympic cross-country team in January.

Canada will field a minimum team of 12 athletes on the 2010 Olympic team. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Five others

- Five athletes have competed in both Paralympics and Olympics, but all of them have been summer-sport athletes.

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Visually impaired paralympian Brian McKeever crosses the finish line yesterday to win the 50-kilometre event at the able-bodied Haywood NorAm and Olympic Trials in Canmore.

Sports in brief

WORLD JUNIORS Taylor Hall scored his second goal in as many games and Martin Jones stopped all 17 shots he faced to lead Canada to a 3-0 win over Finland in a world junior exhibition game yesterday. Team Canada will return to Regina for its third and final pre-competition game against the Czech Republic tonight before opening the world junior tournament on Dec. 26 against Latvia in Saskatoon.

RUGBY Veterans Leslie Cripps, Gillian Florence and Heather Jaques will lead the Canadian women's rugby team in a pair of Test matches against the U.S. on Jan. 12 and 16 in Lakeland, Fla. The tour is part of the Canadian women's preparations for the 2010 World Cup, set for Aug. 20 to Sept. 5 in England.

BLUE BOMBERS The Winnipeg Blue Bombers released veteran middle linebacker Barrin Simpson yesterday. Simpson spent four seasons in Winnipeg, appearing in 52 regular-season games, three playoff contests and a Grey Cup.

BILLS Buffalo Bills cornerback Terrence McGee has been placed on injured reserve because of a rotator cuff injury. The team also bolstered its banged-up quarterback ranks by re-signing former third-stringer Gibran Hamdan. The moves were announced yesterday as Buffalo prepares to play at Atlanta this weekend.

BOXING The megafight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. has been thrown into jeopardy. Mayweather's camp is demanding the fighters submit to Olympic-type drug testing in the weeks leading up to the bout. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3

SCOREBOARD

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Atlanta 112 Minnesota 87
Boston 103 Indiana 94
Charlotte 88 Detroit 76
Memphis 121 Golden State 108
New York 88 Chicago 81
Washington 105 Philadelphia 98
Portland 85 Dallas 81
Houston 108 L.A. Clippers 99
Oklahoma City at L.A. Lakers

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

San Jose 3 Chicago 2
Anaheim 4 at Colorado 2
Nashville at Vancouver

METRO HOCKEY POOL STANDINGS*

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NAME	LOCATION	GP	G	A	PTS
1. Joanne Doiron	NB, CA	415	173	256	429
2. Christian Gagnon	NB, CA	417	175	248	423
3. Kyle Turk	NS, CA	421	194	225	419
4. Cole Warren	NS, CA	422	151	267	418
4. Steve Ferguson	ON, CA	421	174	244	418
6. Jonathon Gremsperger	BC, CA	418	180	233	413
6. Kelly Wrishko	AB, CA	417	171	242	413
6. Paula Almeida-Stille		421	173	240	413
6. Stephen Stille	ON, CA	421	173	240	413
10. Rick Kit	ON, CA	417	179	232	411
11. Shawn Tschritter	AB, CA	417	171	239	410
12. Jean-Paul Osborne	QC, CA	413	169	238	407
13. Brian B	AB, CA	417	173	233	406
13. Claude Brunelle	BC, CA	424	167	239	406
13. Sarah Jackson	ON, CA	409	162	244	406

** Results exclude Quebec*

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245 - 225 7th Ave. SW
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264 - 6100 MacLeod Trail S
1 - 4623 Bow Trail SW
203 - 321 6th Ave. SW
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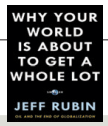
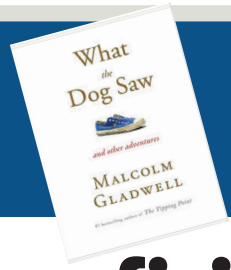


Even more business books for the holidays

For those who work in the financial sector Jeff Rubin is legendary. As CIBC World Markets' chief economist for over 20 years, Rubin's predictions were often unimaginable, yet on the mark. Check out his latest Why Your World is About to get a Whole lot Smaller. CRAIG LUND/FOR METRO CANADA

Workology



More biz book pics

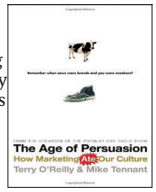
Malcolm Gladwell has become one of Canada's most prolific and successful non fiction authors with his best selling books, Tipping Point, Blink, Outliers and ultimately his latest addition — What the Dog Saw. A perfect gift for the jetsetter or commuter. CRAIG LUND/FOR METRO CANADA

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

BookReview

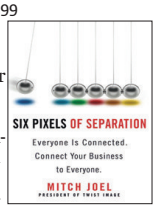
Biz book pics for the holidays

Age of Persuasion
How Marketing Ate Our Culture
Author: Terry O'Reilly & Mike Tennant
Publisher: Knopf Canada
Price: $32



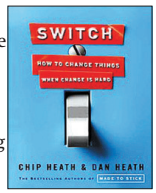
If this book is anything like Terry O'Reilly's radio show, it will be a sure crowd pleaser.

Six Pixels of
Separation
Author: Mitch Joel
Publisher: Grand Central
Price: $32.99



Mitch Joel is marketer cum author. As the president of a successful interactive marketing firm, Joel's book argues that with tools like Facebook the world is even smaller.

Switch
Author: Dan and Chip Heath
Publisher: Random House
Price: $32



In this book, the Heath's examine the concept of changing strategy when one is already successful.

Craig Lund, a director with the staffing firm Marketers on Demand, can be reached at craig.lund@marketersondemand.com

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In Canada, even firings and layoffs are polite

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

In the new movie Up In The Air, George Clooney plays a flying executioner patrolling the skies above America's unravelling economy, touching down only to drop the ax on the luckless casualties of the crisis.

Gary Agnew is Canada's answer to Clooney's American horseman of the economic apocalypse, but the veteran of the downsizing industry says such brutishness would never fly in Canada. Where U.S. firms may hire hitmen like Clooney to pull the trigger, Canadian bosses find the courage to do it themselves — with help.

"The movie has got a U.S. slant to it and is an exaggerated portrait," says Agnew, a partner at the Calgary-based human-resources company Cenera. "We don't go in and fire people. We train managers in how to do it humanely."

After the layoffs, Cenera helps former staff regroup. "I've been doing this for 30 years. Let me tell you: 95 per cent of the people I have worked with have gone to positions that are far better than the positions they were in," Agnew says.

That's what gives him his cheery disposition: He loves helping people turn a career crisis into a career-advancing pivot. But it's not easy. "I think most of my colleagues carry a fairly heavy bag full of emotions because we feel the pain people have been through," he admits.

Laying someone off is never easy, but there are people and companies out there that make it easier.

Up In The Air opens wide Dec. 25

Genevieve Belben heads up DBM's Atlantic Region and has overseen countless downsizing operations. Local branches of the global career management company handle small-scale layoffs, but Belben flies in when an East Coast company is closing, meaning she doesn't quite share the itinerant life of Clooney's character.

Like Agnew, she rarely participates in the actual terminations.

"We're the future focus. We don't want to be tied to the bad news," she says from her Halifax office. "We're retained by a corporation … but we work for the employee."

But no matter how many times she's been through it, D-day is always a bad day. But still, "change is not a bad thing — change spells opportunity," she says.

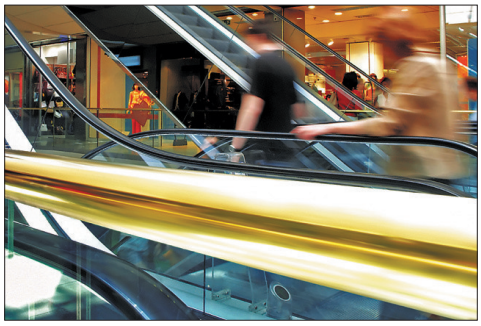
Shop, and hire, until you drop

MAT LECOMPTE
for Metro Canada

BUSY, BUSY, BUSY The holidays are right around the corner, and along with the reunions, good times and parties, it means one more thing; something that can be best summed-up in the first five words of a classic 1973 O'Jays tune: For the love of Money.

Last year a Scotiabank survey estimated that Canadians would spend an average of $790 on various holiday expenses.

A lot of that cash will be spent in big-box retailers like Future Shop and Best Buy — who are/will be making a combined total of 8,000 hires for the holiday season, stretching from now until the new year. Hires will be offered the same wage as existing employees and also receive full employee discounts for their term — helping to ease the financial burden of the season.



Big-box stores will be busy even after the Christmas rush.

Chris Taylor, head of human resources for Future Shop, says the stores are looking to increase their in-store staff by 40-50 per cent for the month of December. Hires will vary by market and store, so he says interested individuals should inquire at the locations nearest to them.

Taylor, along with Danielle Jang of Best Buy, is anticipating a successful season even though the economy has been in a slump. With great deals on a wide variety of items, they expect the seasonal hires to be quite busy throughout the season. This is especially good for Future Shop sales associates who are able to earn commission.

So what kind of discounts can seasonal hires expect? According to Taylor, it varies on the product. For example, items like laptop computers that are sold at a relatively small margin, will not provide the opportunity for huge savings. Items such as television sets, accessories and other items sold at wider margins, however, will offer staff to take advantage of some great savings opportunities. Every little bit helps around this time.

WorkplaceLaw

Daniel Lublin

Metronews.ca/workplacelaw

Employees can make mistakes too

COLUMN Employees are often the author of their own misfortune. Despite my cautionary writings, they routinely sign contracts replete with unfavourable terms. By doing so, they unknowingly agree to be eliminated with minimum notice, demoted, or banished to far away jurisdictions, see their salary slashed and prevented from competing with their employer following their departure — all with legal impunity. But, here is one (among many) example where to the contrary.

Once an employee begins work, it is often too late to have him or her sign an agreement, even if on the first day. After a series of interviews, the CIBC extended Trusty Francis an offer of employment. However, on his first day at work he was presented with a number of forms and agreements that attempted to limit his entitlement to three months' salary if he was fired. At trial, the court found that Francis's employment contract was consummated when he agreed to the first offer of employment and, because nothing of new value was given to him when he showed up at work, the forms and agreements he was told to sign were unenforceable. Otherwise, the court reasoned, an employer could unilaterally impose new terms of employment at any time and an employee would be without leverage to negotiate.

I have prevailed in court by raising the inference that a contract was signed without proper consent. Don't be reluctant to negotiate terms and have any contract reviewed by a lawyer before signing your name.

SEE METRONEWS.CA/WORKPLACELAW TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer with Whitten & Lublin LLP. Reach him at dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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CITY: 7.8L/100 km (36 mpg)▼

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For the latest information, visit us at gm.ca, drop by your local Pontiac Buick GMC Dealer or call us at 1-800-GM-DRIVE: ‡ $1,000 holiday bonus cash is a manufacturer to dealer delivery credit (tax exclusive) available on all 2009/2010 Pontiac Buick GMC models excluding Savana and Medium Duty Trucks. † Financing available on approved GMAC credit only. 0% purchase financing available for 72/60/36 months on 2009 Pontiac G5 (1SM)/G3 (1SM)/Vibe (1SD). Down payment and / or trade may be required. Monthly payment and cost of borrowing will vary depending on amount borrowed and down payment / trade. Example: $10,000 at 0% for 72/60/36 months, the monthly payment is $138.89/$166.67/$277.78. Cost of borrowing is $0, total obligation is $10,000. ‡‡ Offers apply as indicated to new or demonstrator models. Dealer trade may be required. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Limited offers subject to change without notice. Offers apply to qualified retail customers in Alberta Pontiac Buick GMC Dealer Marketing Association area only. See your GM dealer for details. ▼Based on Natural Resources Canada's 2009 Fuel Consumption Guide Ratings. Your actual fuel consumption may vary. ◊ U.S. Government star ratings are part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). For more information on safety ratings, go to www.safercar.gov. ‡‡ OnStar services require vehicle electrical system (including battery), wireless service and GPS satellite signals to be available and operating for features to function properly. OnStar acts as a link to existing emergency service providers. Subscription Service Agreement required. Call 1-888-4ONSTAR (1-888-466-7827) or visit onstar.ca for OnStar's Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policy and details and system limitations. Additional information can be found in the OnStar Owner's Guide. ¥ GMCL will pay the first two months' GMAC finance payments for finance terms up to 60 months only, paid up to a maximum monthly finance payment of $400 (tax included). Offer applicable to equal monthly payment finance agreements with GMAC and subject to GMAC credit approval. License, insurance, registration and administration fees not included and may be payable upon signing. Program not available to recipients of any previous GM student/graduate offer. Visit gmstudentbonus.ca for more details.

Warning issued for child seat car carriers

A product advisory notice has been issued in Canada for certain Dorel infant car seats, which may pose a potential safety hazard due to a handle that may loosen and come off when the seat is used as an infant carrier. CANADIANDRIVER.COM

Metro Drive

Saab sale fails

Saab Automobile AB will be closed down, following an announcement by General Motors that its sale to Spyker Cars could not be completed.

CANADIANDRIVER.COM

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Nissan Leaf fun, agile ride

MICHAEL GOETZ
for Metro Canada

You only have one chance to make a first impression.

Show up for a job interview, for a coveted position in the poultry industry, with untrimmed nose hair and a "Meat is Murder" t-shirt, and well, your goose will be cooked, so to speak.

The ramifications of an unsatisfactory first impression weren't lost on the brain trust at Nissan.

That first drive, that first ownership experience with all-electric Nissan Leaf, has to be completely satisfactory, or the chances of moving electric vehicles to the mainstream will be stopped in its tracks, says Ian Forsythe, a product specialist at Nissan Canada.

So we have an all-electric vehicle that aims to look and drive pretty close to how consumers would expect a five-passenger, front-drive family sedan to look and drive (with one major exception, which we'll get to shortly).

I had a chance to check if Nissan managed its objective, via a brief fling in a Leaf prototype in a parking lot in Vancouver. Yes, a pylon course. I took two laps, for a combined seat time of about one minute and 37 seconds. Not quite like a lap around the famed Nurburgring, but enough to confirm that Leaf is fun to drive and will not unnerve anybody. It handles very much like every other front-drive sedan — agile, but with just the right amount of dialed-in understeer to make the vehicle predictable and safe.

It's even hard to detect its regenerative braking system. Other electric vehicles and hybrids have more aggressive regenerative systems, which means they essentially "brake" the vehicle anytime you're off the "gas," to convert every little bit of kinetic energy to electricity. The Leaf coasts more like a conventional car.

The prototype we drove had Versa bodywork over its Leaf electric platform. A full-blown Leaf was available for viewing, and you can see that, while it is different, it's not scary different. It doesn't need a front radiator grille or a tailpipe, so it has neither. The plug-in "socket" is behind a flap on its front hood, which is short and low for aerodynamic purposes.

The one electric motor is fitted up front, but very low in the body, as are the batteries. Other EVs and hybrids use cylinder-shaped batteries, but the lithium-ion battery pack in the Leaf is formed in thin, laminated sheets. This keeps the batteries cool, which is so necessary for longevity and reliability.

But back to our parking lot run… The one defining characteristic of all electric vehicles is "instantaneous" torque. Depress the "gas" pedal, or whatever you want to call it, and the Leaf shoots forward like it was suddenly hitched to a moving transport truck. And Nissan even dialed a bit off the experience, to make it less surprising, and more like something we're used to…

So maybe you want one? Well you can't have one. At least not until the early fall of 2011. Why the wait? It's back to that first impression thing.

Nissan and other EV makers need infrastructure to develop in some Canadian cities, so owners actually have places to recharge their vehicles, other than at their homes. Any other way, and EVs will blow their first, good shot at stardom and it's back to dinner theatre.

2010 Nissan Leaf

Type: 5-door hatchback
Powertrain: 80 kilowatt AC electric motor, laminated lithium-ion battery pack (the equivalent of about 106 hp and 207 lb-ft of torque)
Charging times: About 8 hours on 220-volt current
Range: 160 km per full charge
Top Speed: Over 140 km/h

Highlights

- Zero Emissions
- Not available until late 2011
- Vancouver gets first Canadian units

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Best cars of the decade...for now

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Michael Goetz
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This decade is just about toast. So time for another list — the top ten vehicles of the decade. I wish I had a definitive one to offer you.

Every time I examined the contenders on my list, I would kick some out, and pull others in. It was, and is, in constant flux — like a four-year old on a Count Chocula high.

So consider the following only my "current for the moment" nominations for vehicles with impact and/or panache, that were born between 2000 and 2009…

The third-generation **Toyota Prius** (2004-2009) was the one that cemented it as the hybrid poster boy. The two previous generations had little impact, but this one debuted an iconic profile, pushed hybrids into the public consciousness, and eventually proved that hybrids could stand up to long years of use (and abuse).

The first-generation **Nissan Murano** (2002-2007) was not the first crossover, but definitely the most attractive and appealing one so far produced. It demonstrated a new and very successful mainstream and classy direction for crossovers — and one that had nothing to do with mud. Net result: unibody crossovers rule, body-on-frame SUVs drool.

The **Bugatti Veyron** (2005-2008) was built to impress: 8.0-litre,16-cylinder engine, 1,001 horsepower, and a top speed of 407.9 km/h. It is beyond desirable and virtually unobtainable. It also has a decent stereo, and looks pretty good in blue..

This decade was just another one when **Honda Civic** rocked the house. It is far and away Canada's best selling car of the decade, and for good reason.

The Honda Civic

Same thing for the **Ford F-150** — it is easily the top selling truck nameplate of the decade, and continues to stay in front of a very determined group of competitors. This Ford also pioneered the concept that truck interiors, particularly crew cabs, need not be stark places with rock-hard seats and no amenities.

The next two cars on our list — the re-born **Ford Thunderbird** and **Mini** — both pushed the notion that "retro" styling has great appeal and can be done effectively in a modern way. The Mini also proved that buyers are willing to pay a premium for "small," if it's the right kind of "small."

The **2008 Chevrolet Malibu** lead a pack of domestic-built sedans that could legitimately take back the midsize market, which GM, Ford and Chrysler seemed to abdicate to the imports in the previous decades. Based on an Opel platform, Malibu is also a good example of why global design and engineering is now the only way to go..

The **2004 Cadillac CTS** rejuventated Cadillac in a profound way, and is one of the few bold designs to spring from the decade. A new-generation CTS launched in 2009, and its high-output "V" series utilizes a version of the Corvette ZR1 V8, making it one of the fastest sports sedans on the planet.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for over 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

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Highway: 6.0L/100km (47 MPG)▲▲

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SL AWD MODEL SHOWN▲
www.nissan.ca/rogue

2010
ROGUE FWD S

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Highway: 7.3L/100km (39 MPG)▲▲

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LEASE RATE **4.9%**
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$1,950 DOWN PAYMENT
$13,905 TOTAL LEASE OBLIGATION

★★★★★ 5-STAR RATING FOR FRONT-IMPACT CRASH SAFETY[4]

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Highway: 6.4L/100km (44 MPG)▲▲

2.0 SL MODEL SHOWN▲
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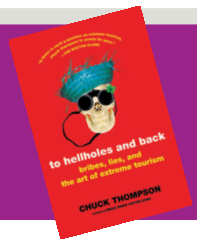
Three (3) Grand Prizes available to be won, each consisting of a trip for two (2) people to 2010 Pro Bowl and Super Bowl XLIV in South Florida. Approximate retail value of each Grand Prize is $10,000.00 (CDN). Random draw will be held on January 12, 2010 in Mississauga, ON. Must be a resident of Canada (excluding Québec), over age of majority. Odds of winning depend on the total number of eligible entries received. Correct answer to mathematical skill testing question required. Limit of one (1) entry per person/household. (c) 2009 NFL Ventures LP. Team names/logos are trademarks of the teams indicated. All other NFL-related trademarks are trademarks of the National Football League. ‡0% purchase financing for up to 36 months available on 2010 Altima Sedan (excluding Hybrid), Sentra and Rogue models. Finance Example for a new 2010 Altima Sedan 2.5 S (T4RG10 AE00): $26,498 Selling Price including ($1,400) freight and PDE, financed at 0% APR for 36 months equals $597.17 per month with $5,000 down payment or equivalent trade-in. Cost of borrowing is $0 for a total obligation of $26,498. Up to $84 PPSA, license, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. Finance offers are available on approved credit through Nissan Canada Finance for a limited time, may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. Retailers are free to set individual prices. Offers valid between December 1st, 2009 and January 4th, 2010. †Lease Examples: $26,498/$26,198/$16,523 Selling Price for a new 2010 Altima Sedan 2.5 S (T4RG10 AE00)/2010 Rogue FWD S (W6RG10 AA00)/2010 Sentra (C4LG50 AA00) at 2.9%/1.9%/4.9% lease rate for a 48/36/60 month term. Monthly payment is $319/$309/$199 including ($1,400)/($1,500)/($1,325) freight and PDE, with $3,550/$3,700/$1,950 down payment, and $0/$0/$0 security deposit. License, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. All prices are subject to change without notice. Retailer may lease for less. Lease based on a maximum of 24,000 km per year with excess charged at $0.10/km. Total lease obligation is $18,848/$14,840/$13,905. Lease and finance offers are available on approved credit through Nissan Canada Finance for a limited time, may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. Retailers are free to set individual prices. Offers valid between December 1st, 2009 and January 4th, 2010. ††Selling Price for a new 2010 Altima Sedan 2.5 S (T4RG10 AE00), CVT transmission/2010 Rogue FWD S (W6RG10 AA00), CVT transmission/2010 Sentra (C4LG50 AA00), manual transmission. Freight and PDE charges ($1,400)/($1,500)/($1,325) are included. License, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. All prices are subject to change without notice. Retailer may sell for less. ▲Actual mileage may vary with driving conditions - use for comparison only. ▲▲Models shown $33,298 Selling Price for a new 2010 Altima Sedan 3.5 SR (T4SG10 AA00), CVT transmission/$30,798 Selling Price for a new 2010 Rogue SL AWD (Y6SG10 AA00), CVT transmission/$24,423 Selling Price for a new 2010 Sentra 2.0 SL (C4TG10 AA00), CVT transmission. Freight and PDE charges ($1,400)/($1,500)/($1,325) are included. License, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. All prices are subject to change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. Retailer may sell for less. [1]The Nissan Altima received the lowest number of problems per 100 vehicles among midsize cars in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2009 U.S. Initial Quality Study℠. Study based on responses from 80,930 U.S. new-vehicle owners, measuring 245 models and measures opinions after 90 days of ownership. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of owners surveyed in February-May 2009. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com. [2]The 2010 Rogue is winner of a Consumers Digest Best Buy Award. The Best Buy Seal is a registered trademark of Consumers Digest Communications, LLC, used under license. [3]The 2009 Rogue is winner of ALG Residual Value Award - CUV Segment. [4]Government star ratings are part of the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) New Car Assessment Program (www.safercar.gov). U.S. model tested. Please see www.safercar.gov for up to date information. ▪For a limited time receive up to $1,000 Grad discount available on select models when leasing or financing a new 2009 or 2010 Nissan. See retailer for complete Grad program details.

ZAGAT RATED

Going to the Games?

Just in time for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, Zagat has released an updated guide to Vancouver, with recommendations for restaurants and attractions in the city as well as for the ski resort town of Whistler and for beautiful Vancouver Island. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Travel



Going to hellholes in a hand basket

Author Chuck Thompson sets out to discover if some of the world's most ill-reputed travel destinations live up to their bad raps. Whether he's diving head long into an Indian monsoon or traveling across the Congo in the company of a notorious dictator's bodyguard, To Hellholes and Back delivers Thompson's trademark combination of hilarious stories and wildly provocative opinions, as well as some surprising observations about America's evolving place in the world. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: BEN.RYCROFT@METRONEWS.CA

Travel in brief

RESORT RE-OPENS A popular luxury Florida Keys resort has reopened almost a year after its primary building was ravaged by a New Year's Eve fire. Guests began checking into the 11-hectare Cheeca Lodge Resort&Spa this month as workers completed finishing touches on a new main lodge.

TOP 10 IN 2010 Top 10 cities for next year, according to Lonely Planet, are Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Charleston, S.C.; Cork, Ireland; Cuenca, Ecuador; Istanbul, Turkey; Kyoto, Japan; Lecce, Italy; Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Singapore and Vancouver. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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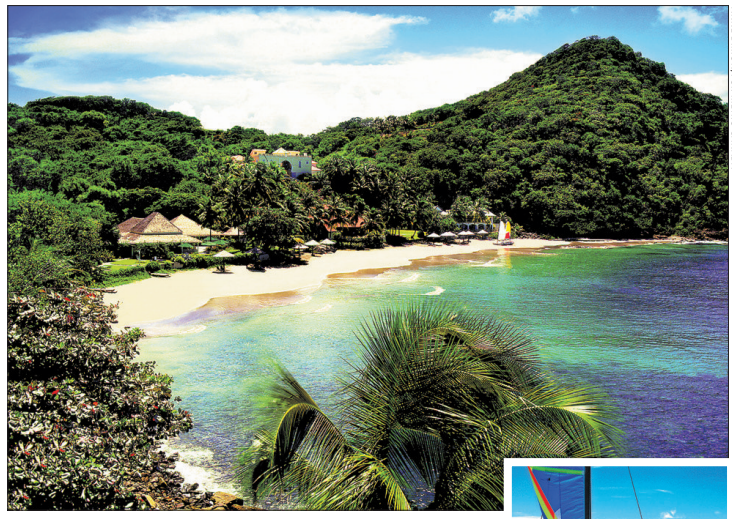

ANNE DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

The secluded resort offers various levels of yoga, meditation and stretching classes.

Watersports, such as kayaking and sailing, are popular choices.

The tag line reads: "Give us your body for a week, and we will give you back your mind." But what I'm wondering as I arrive for my two-night stay and am welcomed by a boisterous chorus of crickets is if I'm here for just two days, do they give me back a piece of my mind?

Located on the extreme northern side of the island of St. Lucia about a 20-minute drive from the capital of Castries, and about an hour away from the famous Piton volcanic peaks, Le Sport opened in the mid-'80s with health and wellness front and centre. Back then the concept of taking a holiday to launch a healthier lifestyle had not yet gone main stream.

Clearly, the all-inclusive Le Sport was a resort ahead of its time.

In addition to the expected beach resort activities — kayaking, sailing, scuba, for instance — are those that keep many guests returning for an annual retreat. There are various levels of yoga, meditation, spinning and stretching classes, Tai Chi, introductions to fencing and martial arts ... the list goes on and on and on.

Guests are invited to do as much or as little as they want.

Nothing is forced but there are a few not so subtle encouragements here and there. For instance, there are no TV sets in any of the resort's 154 guest rooms.

45 The number of therapists who work at Le Sport. They feature wellness practitioners brought in from different parts of the globe including those that specialize in Reiki, Balinese therapies, Ayurveda, acupuncture, nutrition/iridology and hypno and psycho therapies

In addition to the wide range of programs, one of the main points of distinction of this beachfront all-inclusive is that spa treatments are included. Guests are entitled to one spa treatment a day as part of the package.

There are seven treatments to select from including 50-minute scrubs, facials and massages. The resort stresses this is not a restrictive place but a place to make subtle but significant changes that can be taken home and implemented into everyday life.

Peace of mind is an added bonus.

Anne Dimon is a spa and wellness travel writer and editor of traveltowellness.com

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Sesame Street actor dies of cancer
Alaina Reed Hall, who portrayed Olivia Robinson on Sesame Street for 12 years, has died. Reed Hall was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007 and succumbed Thursday at a Santa Monica, Calif., hospital, her husband, Tamim Amini, told the Los Angeles Times. TVGUIDE.COM

Entertainment

Setting records
Miley Cyrus has broken the record for the largest ever attendance at London's O2 Arena. She played to 16,196 fans during the third of five sold-out concerts at the venue this month. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Chipmunks sequel lacks soul, story

Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel picks up where the original movie left off.

Alvin & The Chipmunks: **The Squeakquel**

Director: Betty Thomas
Stars: Zachary Levi
Classification: G
Rating: ½

On the web

- For an Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel trailer, photos and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

REVIEW When Alvin and the Chipmunks took in over $350 million US at the global box office in 2007, the long-time radio gimmick-turned-Saturday morning cartoon-turned big screen blockbuster was pretty much guaranteed a sequel.

Instead, we got The Squeakquel. And if you find that kind of nauseatingly cute wordplay annoying, wait until you sit through the soulless money-grab that is The Squeakquel.

Picking up pretty much where the first movie left off, The Squeakquel sees the computer-animated pop-star rodents's adopted guardian (Jason Lee) quickly hospitalized after an on-stage accident.

This leaves the Chipmunks in the incapable hands of cousin Toby (Zachary Levi of TV's Chuck), an expendable videogame-obsessed character with all the charm and intellect of a boiled potato.

Sent back to school, the Chipmunks soon face an assortment of stereotypical circumstances (bullying, cliques, etc). But most noteworthy is the introduction of the Chipettes — a triad of female chipmunks that share their counterparts' talent for singing high-pitched pop music.

I suppose they're intended to be adorable but there's something slightly troubling about seeing scantily-clad cartoon characters mimic the booty-shaking moves of Beyoncé's Single Ladies. What's next for toddlers' entertainment? Minnie Mouse krumping to My Humps? What this film is really missing though is a story: Merely spinning the gimmick of a group of gophers crooning contemporary hits in an irritating high-pitch may initially excite a few prepubescents but parents be warned — as you search your purse for earplugs, even the little one may disappear out of sheer restlessness and boredom.

Chipmunks screen times

- Bayers Lake: Wed 12:45-3:50-6:35-9:15 Thu 12:25-2:50
- Crowfoot Crossing: Wed 11:50-2:10-4:25-6:35-9 Thu 11:50-2:10-4:25-6:35
- Empire Studio 16 Country Hills: Wed 12:05-12:50-2:25-3:15-4:45-6:50-7:20-9:15-9:40 Thu 12:05-12:50-2:25-3:15-4:45-6:25-7:10
- MacLeod Trail: Wed 11:30-2-4:30-7:15-9:35 Thu 11:30-2-4:30-7:15
- Scotiabank Chinook: Wed-Thu 11:40-2-4:30-7:10-9:40
- Sunridge Spectrum: Wed 11:50-2:30-5-7:45-10:15 Thu 11:50-2:30-5-7:45
- Westhills 10: Wed 12:30-4:05-6:50-9:20 Thu 12:30-4:05-6:50
- *Complete listings are also available at metronews.ca/movies.*

Police give Wood assault warning

Wood

PEOPLE A spokesman for Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood says he has been given a formal warning for assault.

David Rigg said police gave Wood the formal warning or caution yesterday after he was arrested earlier this month for assault near his home in Esher in southern England.

Wood divorced last month. His marriage collapsed after he started dating a young Russian woman. A caution is a formal warning given by police. It is not a criminal conviction but police will keep a record of it for five years. Wood said in a statement that he is "greatly relieved this matter is resolved."

When asked about Wood, Surrey Police said that a 62-year-old man had been cautioned over a domestic incident.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Entertainment in brief

TV HBO says Ricky Gervais will be a star voice in a 13-episode animated comedy series early next year. The cable network said yesterday that The Ricky Gervais Show will be based on his wildly popular podcasts. Voices will include Gervais, longtime collaborator Stephen Merchant and their friend Karl Pilkington. Pilkington's musings often inspire the series' offbeat storylines.

COURTS A prosecutor says actor Randy Quaid and his wife Evi have pleaded not guilty to felony charges of defrauding an innkeeper. The couple appeared yesterday in a Santa Barbara courtroom. Deputy District Attorney Lee Carter says they were released on $20,000 bail apiece. They are accused of using an invalid credit card to defraud San Ysidro Ranch in Montecito of more than $10,000.

BROADWAY Megan Mullally will return to Broadway in the Roundabout Theatre Company revival of Lips Together, Teeth Apart, Terrence McNally's comedy about two married couples sharing a Fourth of July weekend at a Fire Island beach house. Patton Oswalt is also in the cast. the production will open April 29 at the American Airlines Theatre.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the real Jersey shore, everyone is a critic

On MTV's reality television show Jersey Shore, the Beachcomber Bar is a place where the clothes are skimpy and punches can fly.

But there's another reality in the resort town Seaside Heights, which is both a setting and a state of mind on the show about eight buff, tanned twenty-somethings.

The town of 3,100 is hushed. And the people who are around this time of year say this just isn't the same place as the one on the show, which was filmed in the summer when the town's population grows tenfold. "You're trying to create a family town, and you got a bunch of kids acting very rude," said John LaStalla, a 44-year-old native and municipal worker.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cameron plans Avatar sequels

James Cameron plans to make two further instalments to the Avatar franchise. The award-winning filmmaker plans to turn the alien love story into a trilogy, but hasn't started work yet. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Trends that defined the decade

iPods, tattoos and reality TV were among the things that changed our lives

Was it only a decade ago that a blackberry was a mere summer fruit? That green was, well, a colour, and reality TV was that one show sandwiched between music videos on MTV?

There were, of course, huge political and social upheavals that roiled our world in the past decade. But there were also the gradual lifestyle changes that you don't always notice — kind of like watching a child grow older. Here's a look at some things that changed our lives:

APPS: There's an app for that! The phrase comes from Apple iPhone advertising, but could apply to the entire decade's gadget explosion, from laptops to GPS systems.

BLOG: I blog, you blog, he blogs ... How did we spend our time before blogging? There are more than 100 million of these web logs out there in cyberspace.

BLACKBERRIES: Considered essential by corporate CEOs and moms planning playdates. Introduced in 2002, the smartphone version is now used by more than 28 million people, according to its Waterloo, Ont.-based maker, Research In Motion Ltd.

CONNECTIVITY: As in, we're all expected to be connected, wirelessly, all the time. Boss emails you on a Sunday? Better answer, unless you're off in Antarctica — you have no excuse.

COUGARS: A new TV series called Cougar Town focuses on a phenomenon that gained its name this decade: women dating younger men.

CROCS: Those ubiquitous plastic clogs debuted in 2002 and became the shoes you loved to hate. Kids love 'em, but there are web groups dedicated to their destruction.

The Blackberry, left, and the iPod, right, were both introduced during the last decade.

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metro

Underwood sports some bling
Carrie Underwood proudly showed off her engagement ring to a friend while watching her fiancé, Mike Fisher, play hockey in Ottawa Monday night. POPEATER.COM

More highlights from the decade

FACEBOOK: Can you believe this social networking site was once limited only to Harvard students? Now it's a time-sucking obsession for more than 300 million users globally.

FOODIE: It's not just that guy in the White House who liked arugula — this was the decade of the foodie, when we all developed gourmet palates. Even a burgers went gourmet.

GOOGLE: This was the decade that Google became a part of our brain function. You know that guy who was in that movie — when was it? Just Google it.

IPODS: An icon of the digital age, it's hard to believe this portable media player was first launched in 2001. Six years later the 100 millionth iPod was sold.

REALITY TV: As a nation, we became addicted to reality TV, from the feuding Gosselins of Jon&Kate Plus 8 to American Idol to Project Runway. At decade's end, the Heenes of Balloon Boy fame and the Salahis of gatecrashing fame give reality TV some unwanted attention.

TATTOOS: It started innocently enough — maybe a butterfly on the shoulder or a tribal symbol on the bicep. A few characters from the Chinese alphabet later it seemed any hipster who really meant it had a full sleeve of tattoos. The trend extended to middle-aged moms and even tween idol Miley Cyrus.

TEXTING: R u still rding this sty? Hope u r. This is the decade we start communicating in the shorthand of text messages. Get used to it: Email is so '00s.

TWITTER: The new social network introduced tweets, retweets, follows and trending topics — as long as it fit in 140 characters.

WII: In a sea of video games, this simple console became the decade's breakout hit by appealing to the non-gaming masses. Wiis became a centre of family gaming, home fitness and even senior socializing.

WIKIPEDIA: A boon to lazy students everywhere, the open-source encyclopedia used the masses to police its entries and keep them accurate.

YOUTUBE: The video-sharing site was born in 2005. Political candidates in 2008 even had their on channels.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Twitter (co-founder Evan Williams, right) helped defined the decade. So did reality TV. Richard Hatch, above, won the first season of hit show Survivor.

CA	Vu	SC	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/23/09	267	351 - ACCESS	Alberta Primetime (Live)		Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		*Lives of the Saints* (2005, Drama) Sophia Loren.				Primetime
	243	317 3 CFCN	Corner Gas	Degrassi: TNG	Rita MacNeil		*Home for the Holidays* (2005, Drama) Sean Young. (DVS)				CTV News
	-	- 4 OMNI	King	The Simpsons	Omni News: S. Asian Edition		Omni News: Cantonese Edition		Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Friends
	-	371 5 KXLY	4 News at 6	4 News at 6:30	Entertainment	The Insider (N)	Grinch Stole	The Middle	Modern Family	The Middle	Cougar Town
	245	306 6 CBRT	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	*Scrooge* ★★★ (1951, Fantasy) Alastair Sim.				CBC News: The National		The Hour
	244	338 7 CICT	ET Canada	Entertainment	Glee (HDTV)		*Christmas Town* (2008, Romance-Comedy), Garry Chalk				News Hour
	246	- 8 CKAL	Murdoch Mysteries		The Jay Leno Show (N)		Community	Community	Modern Family	Cougar Town	Your City
	119	705 9 CBXFT	La Petite vie	*Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* ★★ (2004, Aventures) Jackie Chan. (SC)					Le Téléjournal Nouvelles. (SC)		La Zone (SC)
	-	- 10 SHAW	(6) Local Programming						Local Programming		
primetime	-	372 12 KREM	News	Access H.	The Doctors		A Home for the Holidays		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		CSI: NY
	-	374 14 KSPS	PBS NewsHour (N)		Christmas at Belmont (N)		Great Performances (HDTV) Doomed lovers. (N)				Three Tenors
	502	390 15 CBC	CBC News: The National		Princess Diana		CBC News: The National		CBC News: The National		Princess Diana
	-	370 16 KHQ	News (N)	Be-Millionaire	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel Fortune	Mercy (HDTV)		Mercy (HDTV)		Jay Leno Show
	-	373 22 KAYU	The Office	Raymond	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Glee "Preggers" (HDTV)		Glee (HDTV)		News
news	297	652 37 WPIX	Gossip Girl (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men	Friends	Friends	According-Jim	Family Guy
	500	500 29 CNN	Larry King Live (N)		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)				Larry King Live		Cooper 360
	508	502 31 CNN2	The Joy Behar Show		Nancy Grace		Showbiz Tonight		The Joy Behar Show		Nancy Grace
sports	400	400 21 TSN	Hockey	NHL Hockey St. Louis Blues at Calgary Flames. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre	Boxing Manny Pacquiao vs.	
	408	418 27 net	NHL Hockey	Sportsnet Con.	Beach Voll.	Beach Voll.	Hockey Central	Flames Week	Sportsnet Connected (N)		Telus Oilers
	410	403 30 SCORE	College Football: San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl					Score Now	Score Now		Score Now
	411	457 44 OLN	Survivorman		Ghost Hunters		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Ghost Hunters
	417	406 48 SPEED	Pass Time	Pass Time	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pass Time	Pass Time	Dangerous Drives (HDTV)		Pass Time
family	552	543 20 YTV	Magic Gift of the Snowman		The Santa Claus Brothers		A Miser Brothers' Christmas		Fries That?	Mon. Warriors	Family Biz
	557	541 39 FAM	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Sonny Chance	Suite Life	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School
	555	545 67 TOON	Christmas Carol: Scrooge		Annabelle's Wish			Wayside	Futurama	King of the Hill	American Dad
cable variety	575	583 11 CMT	(6) *Moonlight and Mistletoe*		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Christmas in Whistler		*Moonlight and Mistletoe* (2008, Drama)		
	553	546 17 TREE	Lost in Snow	Fluffy Gardens	Frst Snw-Wint	Yo Gabba	Max & Ruby	Dragon (DVS)	Backyardigans	Ni Hao, Kai-lan	Go, Diego, Go!
	505	398 19 TWN	(5) EarthWatch One		EarthWatch One		EarthWatch Two				
	602	568 23 W	Confidential	Divine Design	*A Wind at My Back Christmas* (2001, Drama), Tyrone Savage				*He Sees You When You're Sleeping* (2002)		
	521	560 24 TLC	Lottery Changed My Life		Accidental Fortune (N)		Mega-Tsunami: 5 Years Later		Lottery Changed My Life		Fortune
	603	561 25 FOOD	Italian Escape	Italian Escape	Italian Escape	Italian Escape	Jamie Cooks Christmas		Italian Escape	Italian Escape	Italian Escape
	615	520 26 A&E	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Steven Seagal	Steven Seagal	Steven Seagal	Steven Seagal	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Bounty Hunter
	617	522 32 SHOW	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	The Outer Limits		The Guard "The Hold"		CraSh & Burn		Bones
	601	562 33 SLICE	Newlywed	Newlywed	In Laws	In Laws	ET Canada	What Happen?	Work Out "Sky-Lab 2.0"		Brat Camp
	-	633 34 ENC2	(6:50) *This Is My Father* ★★★ (1998, Drama) Aidan Quinn.				*Uncle Buck* ★★ (1989, Comedy) John Candy.			*Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)*	
	520	505 35 DISC	Peak to Peak: Gondola		Mayday		Daily Planet		Mayday		Mighty Ships
	620	523 36 BRAVO	Wingfield	Star Portraits	White Collar (Part 1 of 2)		Law & Order "Mayhem"		Without a Trace		White Collar
	294	650 40 WPCH	The Office	The Office	*The Holiday* ★★ (2006, Romance-Comedy) Cameron Diaz, Kate Winslet.					The Office	*The Holiday*
	626	547 41 COM	Just for Laughs		Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	22 Minutes	The Simpsons	South Park	RENO 911! (N)
	-	539 42 TCM	(6) *To Have and Have Not*		*The Big Sleep* ★★★ (1946, Mystery) (DVS)				*Dark Passage* (1947, Mystery) (DVS)		
	628	584 43 SPIKE	*Star Wars: Episode II -- Attack of the Clones* ★★ (2002, Science Fiction) Ewan McGregor.						*Star Wars: Episode III -- Revenge of the Sith*		
	522	516 45 HIST	Outlaw Bikers		Ice Pilots NWT (N)		Life After People		Ice Road Truckers		Ice Pilots NWT
	627	528 46 SPACE	*Shaun of the Dead* ★★★ (2004, Comedy) Simon Pegg.				(9:10) *Warriors of Terra* (2006, Horror) Edward Furlong.				*Feast*
	-	- 47 AMC	(6) *Kelly's Heroes* ★★★ (1970, War) Clint Eastwood, Telly Savalas.					*Escape From Alcatraz* ★★★ (1979, Suspense)			
	619	525 49 TROP	Project Runway Canada		King	King	The Outer Limits		ET Canada	Whatever	Family Guy
	600	564 50 HGTV	Property Virgin	Unsellable	House Hunters	House Hunters	Holmes on Homes		Unsellable	Intervention	Property Virgin
	501	391 52 CTV	CTV News Tonight		CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News
	504	508 70 BNN	Squeeze Play		Business News	Commodities	Market Call Tonight		Headline	Commodities	Squeeze Play
	526	507 92 VIVA	The Closer "Round File"		Cold Case "Wishing"		Mediums	Ghostly Enc.	Judging Amy		Missing
	269	350 93 APTN	Investigates	Winterlude 2009		Milestones, Memories, and Moving Forward			2009 National Aboriginal Achievement Awards		
	-	- 94 MCP	World News	News	Sewing Maid	Boys Over Flo	Van. Nights	Iranian Pop	Sabor Latino		Sabor Musical
	571	581 100 MMM	Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Entourage	Wild 'n Out	mmtop10.ca		Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Entourage
	570	580 101 MM	Video on Trial (N)		My Date With...	disBAND	House	Selena Gomez	Video on Trial		Video on Trial
	581	566 102 MTV	Real World-Road Rules		Real World-Road Rules		MTV Live	MTV News	Teen Mom "Fallout"		Real World-Rd
	-	- 116 TV5	Petits meurtres	Signé Chanel		Les Sapins	TV5 Le Journal	(9:35) Francofolies 2008			Acoustic

critics' corner

Peak to Peak: Building the World's Biggest Gondola
Acrophobics need not apply. This new special chronicles the construction of the world's longest and highest ski lift between British Columbia's Whistler and Blackcomb mountains. If you think the 4.4-km ride across a windy valley sounds exhilarating, wait until you see what it was like to build it — fighting Father Time and Mother Nature all the way. 7 PM on DISC

Scrooge
Miserly Ebenezer Scrooge gets a long-overdue attitude adjustment when a trio of ghosts visits him on Christmas Eve in this 1951 adaptation of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," anchored by Alastair Sim's tour de force performance in the title role. Kathleen Harrison, Mervyn Johns, Michael Hordern and Hermione Baddeley co-star. 8 PM on CBRT

Ellen and Portia top favourite celeb couples list

Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi have a lot of fans. In a popeater.com poll asking who was the favorite celebrity couple of the year, the talk show host and actress took the top honour. POPEATER.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Portman grateful to be an only child?

HOW DO YOU KNOW *THEY* WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THE TALENTED ONES, NAT? Natalie Portman doesn't believe she would have become an actress if she'd had brothers or sisters. The star is an only child and doesn't believe her parents would have been able to devote so much time to her and take her to all her auditions if she'd had siblings, femalefirst.co.uk reports. "I had the sole attention of my parents. And you know what? If I had had brothers or sisters I would have never become an actress," she said.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Murphy's death 'destroyed' husband

MORE DETAILS EMERGE Brittany Murphy's death has "destroyed" her husband, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The late Clueless actress' spouse, British screenwriter Simon Monjack, has spoken out about his beloved wife — who died of a cardiac arrest at her Los Angeles home aged just 32 on Sunday — and his devastation at her passing.

He said on Monday that, "My world was destroyed yesterday."

Monjack has also denied rumours Brittany had been mixing with "controlling" people.

He explained: "I don't know why anyone would think that. She found love. We found love. Brittany didn't get to where Brittany was with anyone controlling her — Brittany was Brittany."

In related news, Los Angeles coroner's officials are looking into how details of an investigator's report on Brittany Murphy's death were leaked to TMZ.

Assistant Chief Coroner Ed Winter says he doesn't know how the website apparently obtained the confidential report.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

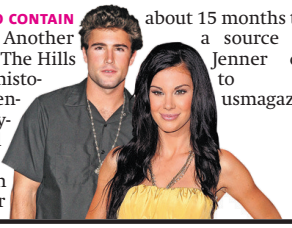
Is Tiger looking to mend image on SNL?

MEANWHILE, HE'S ON A BOAT Tiger Woods may be viewing a surprise appearance on Saturday Night Live as the best way to mend his image, according to MSNBC. "He's a little incredulous at the way he's being judged," a source says. "He thinks his golf game should be all people care about. If he went on SNL it would definitely change the conversation." Meanwhile, his yacht, Privacy, has set sail, possibly with Woods on it. "Tiger's boat Privacy has been docked at Old Port Cove in North Palm Beach for more than a week," a source tells People magazine. "On Saturday morning, after stocking up on provisions from Costco, the boat left town."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Hills star moves to Splitsville

LADIES, TRY TO CONTAIN YOURSELVES Another couple from The Hills is reality-TV history. Brody Jenner and Playboy model Jayde Nicole have broken up after about 15 months together, a source close to Jenner confirms to usmagazine.com.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity tweets

Josh Groban doesn't want to procrastinate alone, Lady Gaga is worried about the revellers at her show, and Katy Perry drives a stake through the vampire rumours.

- @joshgroban Anyone else saving christmas shopping for 4 pm on thurs?
- @ladygaga on a scale of 1 to 10 exactly HOW intoxicated are you in the crowd. PLEASE don't faint in crowd tonight little monsters, it distracts me :)
- @katyperry Read a bunch of yesterdays-news-BULLOCKS. Ppl should know by now that I don't do vampires, but I do, DO @rustyrockets. Don't get it TWISTED!

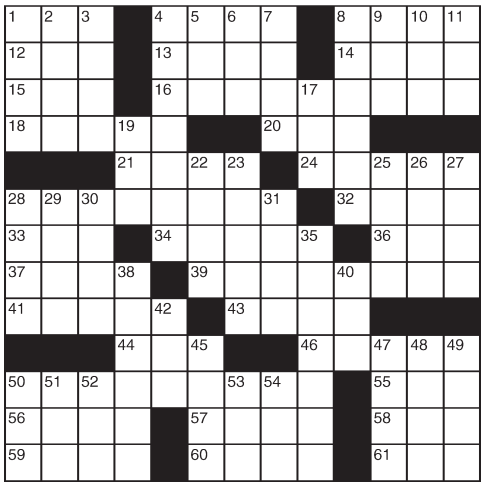
METRO WORLD NEWS

Today Sunny -18 C / -23 C
Thursday Sunny -11 C / -24 C
Friday Mostly Sunny -4 C / -15 C

BREAKFAST TELEVISION

Andrew Schultz, Meteorologist – Breakfast Television
"I get to spread the word on how your day, evening or weekend will shape up with our ever-changing weather here in Alberta." **WEEKDAYS AT 6 A.M.**

Take Five



Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	4							2
		9	1					
2		8		7	4			5
					3		8	1
		4		1		7		
6	3		8					
9			7	5		8		3
					6	9		
8							5	

ACROSS

ACROSS
1 Massachusetts cape
4 Eager
8 React in horror
12 Lawyers' org.
13 Baseball team
14 Church section
15 Part of H.R.H., at times
16 "The Clue in the Crossword Cipher" solver
18 Asian leader who inspired a jacket style
20 Small barrel
21 "Oh, woe!"
24 Antitoxin
28 Tapped
32 Ripped
33 Tatter
34 Binge
36 Past
37 Bit for Fermi
39 Patron of Scotland
41 Foundation
43 Not pizzicato
44 Slight application
46 Friars Club honor
50 "The Price Is Right" host
55 Scrooge's cry
56 Tittle
57 Unmacho type
58 Work with
59 Vacillate
60 Lummox
61 "Honor — father ..."

DOWN

1 Songwriter Sammy
2 Theater trophy
3 Morse's T
4 Ring
5 By way of
6 Hostel
7 Ship's floor
8 Thingie
9 Springtime abbr.
10 Away from NNW
11 Church perch
17 "Absolutely"
19 Uncooked
22 iPhone downloads
23 In a way, slangily
25 Bellow
26 Incite
27 Cat call
28 Hardly colorful
29 — -tat-tat
30 Hollywood clashers
31 Approach
35 Put into code
38 Carnival area
40 Scooby- —
42 Pouch
45 Cry loudly
47 Touch
48 Obi or cummerbund
49 Yon folks
50 Insult
51 Tier
52 Greek vowel
53 "Flying Down to —"
54 Ostrich's cousin

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

H	A	J	J		S	K	I	P		P	S	I		
A	L	A	I		U	N	T	O		O	A	R		
D	I	R	T	Y	P	O	O	L		O	F	A		
			N	E	S	T		E	L	L	E	N		
W	I	S	E	S			A	M	O	S				
A	S	H	Y		F	A	M	I	S	H	E	D		
D	N	A		M	A	G	I	C		A	P	E		
S	T	R	E	A	K	E	D		C	R	E	E		
		K	L	E	E			M	A	K	E	R		
Y	E	T	I	S		O	U	R	S					
O	V	A		T	A	N	K	S	U	I	T	S		
D	E	N		R	I	C	E		A	C	H	E		
A	R	K		O	R	E	S		L	Y	O	N		

4	5	3	7	6	2	1	9	8
2	9	6	1	4	8	7	5	3
7	8	1	5	3	9	6	4	2
6	2	8	3	9	5	4	7	1
3	4	5	8	7	1	2	6	9
1	7	9	6	2	4	3	8	5
8	3	4	2	5	7	9	1	6
9	1	2	4	8	6	5	3	7
5	6	7	9	1	3	8	2	4

On the web

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Metro Recipe of the Day

Pan-fried Chicken with Mushrooms and Blueberries

INGREDIENTS:
1 tbsp (15 ml) all-purpose flour
4 skinless chicken breast fillets
2 tbsp (25 ml) olive oil
3 strips bacon, chopped
1/2 lb (250 g) chestnut mushrooms, sliced
1 tbsp (15 ml) Dijon mustard
7 oz (200 g) blueberries
Juice of 1/2 lemon
3 tbsp (45 ml) finely chopped fresh parsley

METHOD:
1. Put flour into shallow dish and season well, then spread out. Add chicken breasts and turn to coat. Shake off excess.
2. Heat oil in frying pan over medium-high heat. Add chicken, reduce heat to medium and cook until well browned underneath. Turn over to brown other side. Pierce middle of one breast with point of knife to check that meat is no longer pink.
3. Transfer chicken to serving dish. Add bacon to pan and cook, stirring, until cooked and fat runs out. Add mushrooms and continue to cook over fairly high heat, stirring, 2 minutes.
4. Add mustard to pan and stir with mushrooms and bacon. Gently stir in blueberries. Add lemon juice, stir and immediately remove pan from heat.
5. Sprinkle in parsley, then spoon mushrooms and blueberries over chicken and serve.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

sallybrompton.com For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You may have bitten off a bit more than you can chew but there is no need to panic because in a matter of days you will get your second wind.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
You may be tempted to put off finishing something that has begun to take up a lot of time but considering the effort, that would be a waste.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
It is of the utmost importance that you keep your thoughts positive, even though a number of negative things appear to be happening in your life.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A relationship that has been through a tough time of late will get easier for both of you when love planet Venus moves into your opposite sign.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
The problem you are grappling with has a simple solution but you seem unable to see it because you have convinced yourself that there isn't one.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Cut back on your commitments. Do fewer things for other people. That might sound selfish but you have been giving too much of yourself.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
What other people want is irrelevant. It would appear that someone has been playing on your feelings to further their own position.

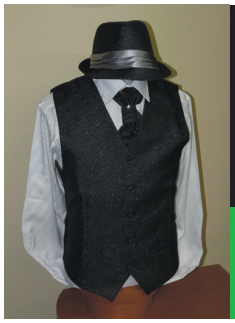
SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
Something that has caused you a great deal of mental and emotional anguish will resolve itself to your satisfaction today.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
You may not want to admit defeat but it seems you have no choice in the matter. Push your ego to one side and don't think it reflects badly on you.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
If you focus your mind too intently in one particular direction today you may miss out on something even more important, and enjoyable.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
Cosmic activity in the most sensitive area of your chart is making you feel vulnerable at the moment but there is no need to fear the worst.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Someone will say something less than friendly to you or about you today and you won't be too happy about it.



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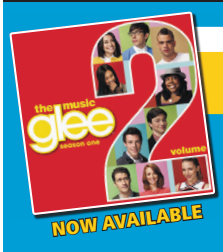

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